



The Future of Work Points to Unified Mobile Workplace Apps for **Collaboration, Connection, and Productivity**



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INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic shifted much of the white-collar workforce from office to home, at least temporarily. But as time has passed, many executives and employees cite the need for in-person contact and collaboration as key motivators for returning to the office, at least some of the time. And while executives, in particular, see the value of working on-site, many companies continue to offer, if not a fully remote work environment, at least a hybrid one.

As a result, organizations are continuing to develop and refine technologies used during the pandemic years, adapting them to the needs and expectations of an often hybrid workforce that values efficiency, productivity, and easy collaboration with peers. Among those technologies are workplace apps that allow employees to communicate, collaborate, streamline processes, and increase productivity.

As employers continue to navigate a changing workplace landscape, where at least some remote work has become the norm, workplace apps have become critical components of keeping executives and employees connected and collaborating, whether at work, at home, or across the globe. At the same time, workplace apps have helped encourage and support companies' return-to-work policies.

How executives are navigating the hybrid work model

To establish what the future of work will look like and how workplace apps are helping to shape it, Modo Labs and Industry Dive conducted a “Future of Work: Mobile Apps for a Global Hybrid Workforce” survey. This research gauges what teams most need and desire from workplace apps, from the flexibility to work from home or office to the ability to seamlessly collaborate with coworkers worldwide on any device, at any time.

Modo Labs surveyed 157 executives from companies across six continents, the vast majority with one or more offices in North America or Europe and all with 2,500 or more employees. Most respondents have worked for their organizations for at least five years in companies across various industries, namely financial services, IT, retail, and health care.

None of the executives surveyed by Modo have fully remote work models in their organizations. However, 86% of companies have some variation of a hybrid work model where executives and employees can work remotely for at least some time. While most of those surveyed work under a “hybrid structured” model where they have defined days and times required to be in the office, 57% said they’d prefer a “hybrid flexible” model where they can choose when and where to work.



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How executives and employees feel about returning to the office

Seventy percent of surveyed executives cite face-to-face contact with bosses, colleagues, subordinates, and executive management as the key reason for returning to the office, while 53% note they go to the office to meet with clients, and 49% feel socializing with coworkers is an incentive for being on-site.

The survey finding aligns with [insights from a recent Microsoft Work Trend Index](#) reporting that employees need a larger incentive than company expectations to inspire a return to the office. In fact, more than 80% of employees surveyed by Microsoft say building bonds with team members and socializing are key motivators for going into the office.



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How executives and employees are using and want to use workplace apps

Executives say employees value workplace apps for keeping them connected with colleagues. More than half of those surveyed say workplace apps help them collaborate with teammates and save time. They also value apps for connecting them to the latest information on company news and events.

The more employees can access and share information, schedule and assign tasks, and connect using a unified workspace app, like [Modo's Workplace app](#), the more productive and satisfied they will feel at the office or home. Some of the benefits a workplace app can provide include:

- Insights on who is in the office and their schedules
- Access to face-to-face time with senior leadership
- Availability of workspaces or meeting rooms on a given day
- Timely reminder on upcoming company events or training
- Facilities ticketing
- Digital credentialing
- Tailored messages based on employee location and department
- Access to knowledge libraries or training modules
- Accelerated and easier employee onboarding experiences
- Access to information about on-site amenities, like dining menus, food ordering, and space reservations in a wellness room or fitness center

How workplace apps can foster engagement

In recognition of the need to incentivize a return to the office, many companies have done more than institute a return-to-work policy. Organizations are upgrading office space, in many cases building or retrofitting for “smart office” workspaces and buildings, introducing workplace wellness programs, new professional development opportunities, more relaxed dress codes, and gym memberships. Interestingly enough, it’s not workplace amenities that resonate most with employees; it’s engagement.

To that end, most companies offer at least one digital employee app or workplace app to help streamline workflows and increase collaboration and information sharing. Overall, however, executives and employees are craving more. While Modo Labs’ “Future of Work: Mobile Apps for a Global Hybrid Workforce” survey indicates nine in 10 executives have felt connected to their coworkers in the last year, only half say they felt “very connected,” and almost 40% suggest there is room for improvement.





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How to incentivize a return to the office

Given that lack of employee engagement cost organizations \$7.8 trillion in lost productivity in 2022, according to [Gallup's 2023 State of the Global Workplace Report](#), companies have plenty of incentive to increase workplace happiness and satisfaction.

A key way companies can incentivize returning to the office and foster greater productivity is through easy-to-navigate, all-in-one workplace apps. For example, [Modo Workplace offers companies a way to provide a unified mobile experience](#) to help employees navigate the new hybrid workplace. Some of its features include:

- **In-office schedules** that allow employees to view their workday schedules and those of their colleagues to make or cancel meetings and reserve office spaces.
- **Map-based room reservation** features with Microsoft 360, EMS, and Zoom integration to help employees manage hybrid meetings.
- **Collaborator sync** to see who is working when and where and align to allow for easier collaboration with colleagues.



81%

of executives say their organizations will either begin or finish **constructing a smart office building** in the next 24 mos.

Ways companies are using technology to improve the workplace and employee connection

There are a variety of ways companies are developing and employing workplace apps to help employees connect, collaborate, and gain or share information, all while making the workplace operate more efficiently and seamlessly.

Connecting people to the buildings they work in is one way to do this. In fact, 87% of surveyed executives indicate that their companies made office building upgrades in the wake of the pandemic. Some upgrades included smart conferencing, environmental controls, and digital access control. Meanwhile, 81% of executives say

their organizations will either begin or finish constructing a smart office building in the next 24 months.

Connecting people to places

Workplace apps [can also help connect employees with the physical spaces and amenities available where they work](#), including the ability to quickly reserve meeting rooms, order food at on-site dining amenities, schedule time at company fitness centers, navigate the buildings in which they work, and engage with their organizations' special interest groups or social sharing opportunities.

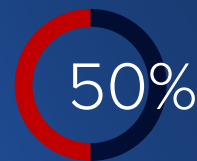
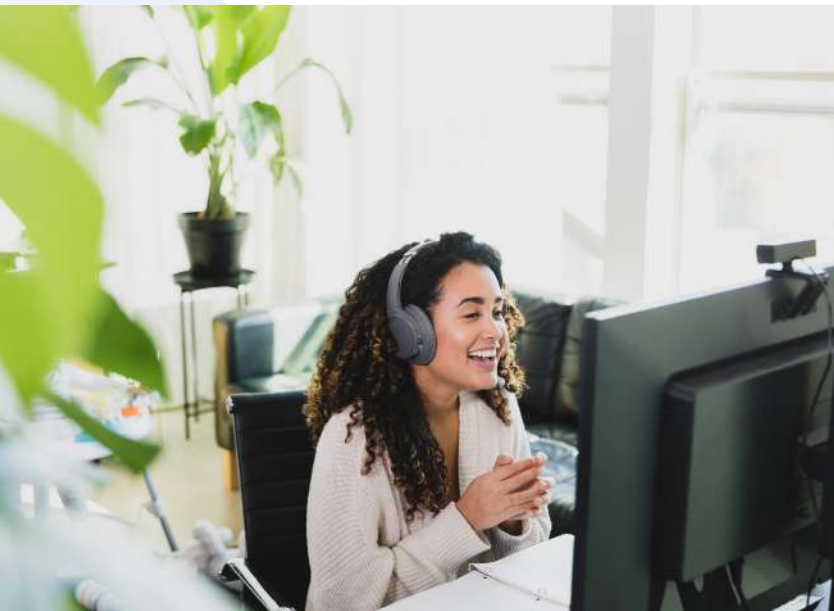
Connecting people to people

Given a key motivation for returning to work is engagement with coworkers (61% of executives say this is a key incentive for being in the office) and almost 50% of surveyed executives see room for improvement when it comes to opportunities for collaboration at work, workplace apps can also provide greater opportunities for connection among coworkers, especially in the world of the new hybrid work model.

A global Fortune 500 pharmaceutical company launched a return-to-office app using the Modos Labs platform to increase workplace safety. As the company developed a hybrid work model, it began to extend the workplace app's functions to [engage employees in the company culture and provide opportunities to](#)

[collaborate and connect](#). As a result, the app ultimately helped turn the company into a human-centered vs. office-centered workplace.

With the goal of ensuring an employee a worthwhile day when on site, Modos's MyCircle capability is among the new pharmaceutical company's app features. MyCircle allows colleagues to see who else will be in the office, sync schedules, and establish virtual spaces for online meetups. Employees can also create robust personal profiles in the app, engage with special interest groups at work, share socially, and gamify the app experience to promote engagement. The company continues to expand the app to allow for facility requests, food ordering, and accessibility information.



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The apps employers are using and why

[Workplace apps](#) have become critical to employee engagement and willingness to return to the office. Nearly 85% of surveyed executives say their company has at least one digital workplace app.

All of these disparate workflows can be integrated into a unified experience in a single Modo-powered app, streamlining employee engagement. 54% of executives say workplace apps help them connect with colleagues. 53% say the apps save them time. However, simplicity wins with employees at the end of the day, as too many apps overwhelm employees.

Organizations are using the apps for an array of purposes, but the highest-ranking ones include:



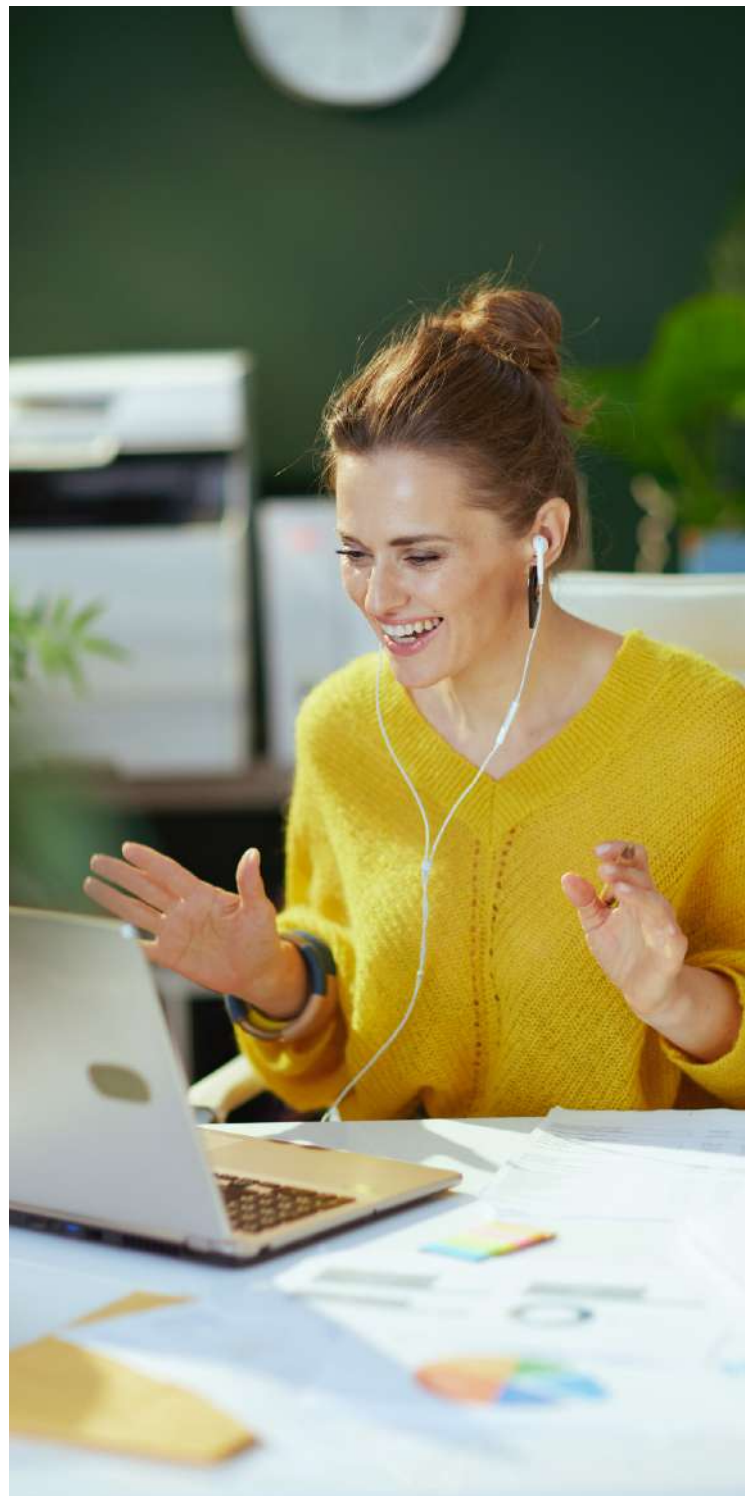
“We spent a great deal of time listening to employees to understand how to bring the most value to their day in the office,” says the COO of a top 10 global investment bank. “We learned that initially we rolled out too many apps, which caused employees confusion about where to find things and ultimately was overwhelming. We shifted to a unified workplace app to help manage daily tasks, such as picking onsite days based on which colleagues are coming in. We also bundled all the amenities that are meaningful, like fitness and special events, by location, so employees pick the times that bring them the most value when they are in the office.”



Organizations are beginning to understand that employees prefer a single, unified workplace app experience. Having to engage with multiple apps does not provide for optimal employee engagement. The better route, and the one preferred by employees, is launching an all-in-one platform to house needed features and functionality so employees only have to go to one place. Modo provides such an all-in-one platform that is secure, flexible and configurable.

In the last several years, [Modo Labs](#) has worked with Fortune 500 companies across the globe to develop and roll out workplace apps to address a variety of needs.

A leading investment bank and Modo customer, for example, recently launched their workplace app to place needed tools at employee's fingertips. The all-in-one app helps users find everything they need to navigate their day wherever they are — at home, in the office, or on the go. Users can reserve a desk or space in their predefined neighborhood directly from the mobile app or desktop. Teams can view when coworkers will be in the office, encouraging valuable face-to-face interactions and collaborations. The firm has 75,000 employees in 41 countries, and the app is used across multinational locations.



What executives and employees most value in workplace apps

According to [a recent Gartner report](#), executives and employees want workplace apps that anticipate their needs and naturally include both collaboration and learning in their daily workflow.

Modo Labs provided just that through a recent partnership with a Fortune 100 investment banking, securities, and investment management firm, which [used its Modo-powered app to hyper-personalize app engagement for employees](#). Based on user profile data, the app personalizes their experience based on where they are, what they do,

and their interests.

For example, if an employee checks the app from home in the morning before heading to work, they will see a dashboard of the day's schedule, including the schedules of in-office colleagues with whom they can collaborate. Then, once the employee arrives at the office and enters via their digital badge, the app might show them lunch options for the day or information about on-site events. At the close of business, the app may have a push notification with transit schedules.



CONCLUSION

Workplace apps can help with both the return to office, ensuring connectivity, collaboration, information sharing, and in-office must see events, while also improving employee engagement with collaboration tools, neighborhoods using MyCircle, scheduling coordination, and social sharing. Workplace apps can also remove some of the stress of commuting to the office with the help of digital id, parking and transit functions, and in-app notifications throughout the day.

Modo Labs' "Future of Work: Mobile Apps for a Global Hybrid Workforce" survey shows that company mandates are not the biggest driver of return to work. Rather, the strongest incentives for employees to go into the office are contact with coworkers, face-to-face collaboration with teammates and/or customers and access to a social network.

As the workplace continues evolving, flexibility is the key to ongoing agility. A full-featured, easily updatable mobile app with tools to support a range of hybrid workplace models can help drive productivity, connection, and collaboration. Modo Labs offers a mobile app platform with out-of-the-box-ready app-building tools that can navigate device compatibility and infinite system and data integrations. [Learn more](#) about how to incentivize and support a return to work with help from Modo Labs.



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